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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [HR](#) [DEFENSE](#) [REFORM](#)
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR COMMANDER, U.S. EUCOM,S MEETING
WITH CROATIAN CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF, GEN JOSIP LUCIC

Classified By: COL Brendan McAloon, DATT, for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (C) Sir, this is the first meeting since Croatia,s NATO accession protocols were signed. Your host, General Josip Lucic (LOOT-zitch) was unexpectedly reappointed for an unprecedented second five-year term as CHOD in January of this year. Lucic is President Mesic,s most trusted military advisor. Although he participated in three months of language training in the United States, his ability to speak English remains rudimentary. President Mesic and key members of his staff are currently scheduled to join you for dinner.

¶2. (SBU) ISAF: Croatia is an active partner in the NATO ISAF mission in Afghanistan. Croatia currently has about 200 soldiers on the ground and intends to expand its contingent to approximately 280 in early September. Croatia has the only non-NATO Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) in ISAF for which it bears all the costs except the U.S.-provided stratlift. Croatia and the Minnesota National Guard are in the early stages of planning to deploy a combined combat-support OMLT next year.

¶3. (C) KFOR: The Croatian Parliament has authorized the deployment of two helicopters to Kosovo in 2009. We expect that the Croatians will offer two of their new MI-171Sh lift helicopters in September for deployment sometime in 2009. This will be the first deployment outside of Croatia for the Air Force.

¶4. (C) Peacekeeping: Croatia prides itself on its transition from a security consumer with UN Peacekeepers on its territory to a security provider with Croatian Armed Forces (CAF) elements involved in fifteen UN peacekeeping operations around the globe, to include the UN Mission to Georgia. The most recent deployment was of 98 CAF personnel to the UN mission in the Golan Heights. Within the next few months Croatia will deploy 15 soldiers to the EU-led mission in Chad. With these deployments Croatia is in the process of implementing its plans to increase and sustain its PKO contributions from around 250 soldiers in 2007 to 600 soldiers by 2010.

¶5. (C) ASPA: The U.S. FMF and IMET programs were suspended in July 2003 due to ASPA sanctions. As a result, the CAF depended entirely upon national resources to accomplish its NATO partnership goals and to equip its forces for ISAF. Croatia is the only ISAF partner and new NATO invitee that accomplished its transformation and financed its ISAF commitments without FMF or Coalition Support Funding. The suspension of IMET during this time has had a telling impact throughout the CAF. Most notably is the lack of U.S.-educated staff officers at the senior and mid-grade officer level to fill critical billets on the MOD, CAF, and NATO Staffs. We can also see the effect at lower levels as the CAF has difficulty finding adequately trained,

English-speaking junior officers and NCOs for deployment and lacks sufficient combat lifesavers and forward air controllers. Croatia has been identified to receive one million dollars of Global Peace Operations Initiative funds, the bulk of which will be dedicated to improve the English language capability of the CAF.

¶16. (SBU) FMF/IMET levels. Croatia is not programmed to receive any FMF in FY08, and is projected to receive only 1.8 million dollars in FMF in 2009. IMET is similarly under funded for a NATO invitee with only 300K in FY08 and projected 500K in FY09. The proposed budget numbers trend better in FY10.

¶17. (C) Procurement Priorities. U.S. FMF funding will be directed at obtaining the necessary NATO-compatible radio equipment, night vision equipment, weapon sights, combat medical equipment, and GPS required to sustain Croatia,s forces in ISAF. Croatia currently has no Type 1 radios or Selective Availability Anti-Spoof Module (SAASM) global positioning systems in its inventory. The MoD has also expressed interest in procuring counter-IED jammers for its ISAF mission. We will also need to direct FMF funds to the upgrades needed to deploy Croatian helicopters to KFOR.

¶18. (C) F-16s. The MoD,s Long Term Development Plan calls for Croatia to replace its 12 soon-to-be post-lifecycle MiG-21 aircraft with a similar number of advanced fighters for domestic air policing. Croatia sent requests for information for Mirage, MiG-29, Eurofighter, Gripen, and F-16 (Block 15 used, Block 15 mid-life upgrade, and Block 50/52 new). Croatia now has all the answers it requested and is conducting further internal studies. There may be some

reevaluation of the need for fighters after NATO membership, but the official policy to procure fighters has not changed.
Bradtke